

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
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BLISS

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THE REPORTS COMING FROM LAKE
 Success of continual disagreements and mounting acrimony make dismal reading. Any who cherished the hope that the terrible possibilities for mankind presented by the prospect of a third war fought with new weapons would be a factor in assuring the success of the United Nations Organization, and particularly of those parts of it designed to prevent war, must be completely disillusioned.

NEWS-LETTER

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AMERICAN-RUSSIAN TENSION

It is only to be expected that where the most facile optimism about the United Nations Organization existed, there the most facile pessimism should be at its height. There is no doubt that a great number of Americans saw the United Nations Organization issue in far too simple terms. They were out of the League of Nations, therefore it was a failure. They were in the United Nations Organization, and provided they were prepared to stay in, it was bound to be a success. It is not being a success and this in spite of American readiness to accept far-reaching limitations of national sovereignty in the matter of atomic energy.

The result of failure has been a leap into a cynical despair of U.N.O. and many Americans are talking and acting as though war with Russia were just round the corner and are

habituating themselves to the idea of it by talking as though it had already broken out. The effect of such talk on a thoughtful Englishman is nowhere better reflected than in Mr. E. M. Forster's broadcast, in which he described the horror with which he heard a group of American business men uproariously applauding and repeating the sentiment that the only harmless Russian was a dead one. When it comes to high flights of retributive abuse, the Russians have nothing on the Americans—the screaming tones of competitive advertising over the radio, the strident exaggerations of large sections of the American press, the bitter and blood-thirsty comments which fly about when there is any labour dispute, the personal animosities engendered and unrestrainedly expressed in the field of politics—all these strike the visitor forcibly. But the ordinary American says, "Aw ! you don't have to take any notice of them, that's just talk, that's the way we carry on, but it doesn't mean anything." We have no means of telling whether dinner parties of commissioners held behind the iron curtain indulge in similar flights, and vow death to all Americans. All we know is that that is how Mr. Vyshinsky talks when he is not at home.

The formation of a new communist international with a central bureau of information may be expected to provoke fresh reactions and to lead to further panicky and provocative utterances on all sides.

An aggravating factor in present relationships is that there are virtually no other meeting grounds between Russia and the rest of the world except the political meeting ground which U.N.O. affords, and even here politics is narrowed down to mean the struggle for power or for the strategic positions from which power can be obtained. There are plenty of organizations in the world which call themselves world organizations.¹ In fact many are only world-minus-Russia organizations. Scarcely a week passes without some fresh underlining of this separation, such as is, for instance, provided in the following extract from a report

¹ A pamphlet, *International Economic Organizations*, published by H.M. Stationery Office, provides a brief survey and lists as many as twenty-one organizations in which a total of sixty-six states participate. Price 1s.

of an international meeting of surgeons held in London in September : " A contribution from Russia on the treatment of burns was anxiously awaited, but to the intense disappointment of the conference no representative from the U.S.S.R. made an appearance." The hope of building up cultural relationships with individual Russians and of securing Russian co-operation in efforts to ameliorate the lot of suffering men and women seems as hopeless an enterprise as the attempt to achieve political agreement at U.N.O.

AN AMERICAN INITIATIVE

But a new initiative has now been taken by the United States. It is a single initiative, although it takes two forms. The first is the calling of the Russian bluff by proposing to liberalize the voting procedure of the Security Council and to make a larger use of the Assembly, to whose proceedings the veto does not apply. The second, primarily on the economic plane, is the Marshall offer of aid to Europe. One aspect of the latter is of great interest since the offer springs from a typical American characteristic, and could indeed be America's new and important contribution to world affairs in the future. The American experience of conquering a vast continent in the space of a hundred years, of reducing it to law and order and evoking from it economic prosperity, has produced in the American mind a way of looking at things which runs something like this : " Poverty breeds ignorance, disease, discontent ; the worst thing about it is that it is totally unnecessary ; given the will there is always the way to organize prosperity. Even out of our slump we managed to make such an experiment as the Tennessee Valley Authority, an achievement of which no other nation in the world would have been capable."

Miss Francis Perkins, who was for many years Minister of Supply in the Roosevelt administration, described in her life of Roosevelt an incident which took place on his journey to Yalta. He ordered that his plane should fly as low as possible over the land, and he noticed for himself its poverty, the meagre cultivation, the lack of water. He asked many questions about irrigation, afforestation and so on. When

he returned home he remarked to Miss Perkins, "They really ought to be able to raise food. There must be a way if there is water underneath the soil. The reason the Near East is so explosive is because the people are so poor. They haven't enough to eat. They haven't enough possible occupations. They need a food supply and they need to raise it themselves. . . When I get through being President of the United States, and this damn war is over, I think Eleanor and I will go to the Near East and see if we can manage to put over an operation like the Tennessee Valley system that will really make something of that country. I would love to do it." In one of its aspects the Marshall offer is an expression of this type of American thinking.

THE POLICY OF THE VATICAN

The question naturally presents itself whether the Christian Churches have anything to contribute to the alleviation of this acute international tension. We shall devote the rest of this News-Letter to an account of action taken by the Churches in recent weeks, beginning with the policy of the Vatican.

A considerable stir was made by a series of four articles which appeared in June in the Vatican organ, the *Osservatore Romano*, by its editor, Count Dalla Torre. It was assumed by press correspondents that they expressed the mind of the Vatican and marked a change in Papal policy. The writer took as his text an earlier declaration by the Pope that for those who see things in the light of a divine order there is always room even in the gravest clashes of human and national interests for a peaceful accommodation, and urged that, just as ideological differences were kept in abeyance during the war, so now that peace has come they should equally be held in check, and that the peoples of the world should set themselves to learn how in spite of these differences they can live together without conflict. He went on to show grounds why Russian foreign policy might be regarded as dictated primarily by considerations of security. The articles were widely interpreted in the British and American press as an attempt by the Vatican to dissociate itself from the Truman policy and as an appeal to the

Western Powers to show a greater tolerance and a spirit of broader understanding in their relations with Russia and communism.

This view was expressed in a B.B.C. broadcast, which quoted the Rome correspondent of *The Times* as saying that the new tone adopted towards Soviet Russia created some surprise in view of the Church's consistent criticism of communism, and attributing the new attitude towards the Soviet Union to the anxious concern of the Pope for the welfare of humanity as a whole. The *Osservatore Romano* reproduced the statement in the London broadcast and retorted that if the Pope's concern for human welfare had brought about the alleged change, one of two things must be true. Either the Pope's concern must be of recent origin, whereas everyone knew that it had been characteristic of the whole Pontificate of Pius XII: or, alternatively, the *Osservatore Romano* must only recently have come into line, in which case a divergence between the newspaper and the supreme directives of human charity of the Pope had existed and been tolerated, which was absurd. If the plea for a greater objectivity and calmness in the appreciation of the present situation appeared to some people to be an appeal to the Western Powers, that was not the concern of the *Osservatore Romano*. If the contention that a war against Russia in the name of anti-communism is morally unacceptable and politically dangerous had led anyone to suppose that the newspaper was no longer utterly opposed to atheistic and materialistic communism, that also was no concern of the newspaper.

In August an exchange of letters took place between the President of the United States and the Pope in connection with the return of Mr. Myron C. Taylor to his post at the Vatican as the President's personal representative.

President Truman wrote :

"I desire to do everything in my power to support and to contribute to a concert of all the forces striving for a moral world. Those forces are in the homes of peaceful and law-abiding citizens in every part of the world who are

exemplifying in their own lives the principles of the good neighbor: the Golden Rule itself. . . . Unless the moral forces of the world now join their strength, discouragement must inevitably deepen, and the strength and effectiveness which thereby would be lost by these moral forces would be gained by those forces which oppose and seek to destroy them. The hopes and ideals of mankind have often been jeopardized by force. They will be jeopardized to-day by any division of the moral forces of the world, or by any refusal to support and strengthen the hopes and ideals of all mankind. As the chosen leader of the people of the United States, I am privileged to pledge full faith to you once again to work with Your Holiness and with every agency of good the world over for an enduring peace. . . .

"I believe that the greatest need in the world to-day, fundamental to all else, is a renewal of faith. I seek to encourage renewed faith in the dignity and worth of the human person in all lands, to the end that the individual's sacred rights, inherent in his relationship to God and his fellows, will be respected in every land. We must have faith in the inevitable triumph of truth and decency; faith that mankind shall live in freedom, not in the chains of untruth nor in the chains of a collectivist organization of their lives; faith of such fullness that it will energize men and women everywhere to build with tenacity the better social world order under self-rule."

The Pope in his reply said:

"We hasten to express our satisfaction and thanks for this latest testimony to the desire and determination of a great and free people to dedicate themselves, with their characteristic confidence and generosity, to the noble task of strengthening the foundations of that peace for which all the peoples of the earth are longing. As their chosen leader, Your Excellency seeks to enlist and cement the co-operation of every force and power which can help to accomplish this task. No one more than we will hope for its success and for the happy achievement of the goal. We pledge our resources and earnestly beg God's assistance.

"What is proposed is to insure the foundations of a lasting peace among nations. It were indeed futile to promise long life to any building erected on shifting sands or a cracked and crumbling base. The foundations, we know, of such a peace—the truth finds expression once again in the letter of Your Excellency—can be secure only if they rest on bed-rock faith in the one, true God, the Creator of all men. It was He who of necessity assigned man's purpose in life. It is from Him, with consequent necessity, that man derives personal, imprescriptible rights to pursue that purpose and to be unhindered in the attainment of it. . . . Once the state, to the exclusion of God, makes itself the source of the rights of the human person, man is forthwith reduced to the condition of a slave, of a mere commodity.

"The order of God is overturned, and history surely makes it clear, to those who wish to read, that the inevitable result is the subversion of order between peoples, is war. The task then before the friends of peace is clear. . . . But those who possess the truth must be conscientious to define it clearly when its foes cleverly distort it, bold to defend it and generous enough to set the course of their lives, both national and personal, by its dictates. This will require, moreover, correcting not a few aberrations.

"Social injustices, racial injustices and religious animosities exist to-day among men and groups who boast of Christian civilization, and they are a very useful and often effective weapon in the hands of those who are bent on destroying all the good which that civilization has brought to man. It is for all sincere lovers of the great human family to unite in wresting those weapons from hostile hands. With that union will come hope that the enemies of God and free men will not prevail.

"Certainly, Your Excellency and all defenders of the rights of the human person will find wholehearted co-operation from God's Church. Faithful custodian of eternal truth and loving mother of all, from her foundation almost two thousand years ago, she has championed the individual against despotic rule, the labouring man against oppression, religion against persecution. Her divinely-given mission

often brings her into conflict with the powers of evil whose sole strength is in their physical force and brutalized spirit, and her leaders are sent into exile or cast into prison or die under torture. This is history of to-day. But the Church is unafraid. She cannot compromise with an avowed enemy of God. She must continue to teach the first and greatest commandment incumbent on every man : ‘ Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with all thy strength,’ and the second like unto the first : ‘ Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself.’ ”

In the correspondence between Mr. Truman and the Pope there lies the danger that few people are able to distinguish between a call to men of good will to rebuild integrity in public life and a rallying of the powers of Rome to supply the moral ballast needed by the anti-communist forces in a head-on collision with Russia. That the Roman Catholic Church should, along with all other Christian forces, provide a rallying point outside the political arena for the millions of men and women who want to see decency, integrity, good faith, just dealing and free association between man and man prevail in a world where the forces of moral chaos are as strong as economic chaos is one thing. That the Roman Catholic Church as a world-wide organization should throw all the forces that she can influence into the camp of the West against Russia in an ideological struggle is quite another. However little the latter may be intended, that is what the Russians are bound to fear. It was no doubt to help to clarify this delicate issue that the articles in the *Osservatore Romano*, which attracted so much attention, were intended.

FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

The Churches in America are alive to the dangers of the present international tension. We are publishing as a Supplement to this issue the latest pronouncement of the Federal Council. An earlier statement on “ Soviet-American Relations ” appeared as a Supplement to C.N.L. No. 275. Such statements, written in carefully guarded language, designed to secure the largest possible measure of assent,

are not in themselves exciting reading. But they are documents into which a great deal of work has been put under the leadership of Mr. John Foster Dulles with his exceptional first-hand knowledge of public affairs, and are important as defining the position taken on matters of critical importance by the most representative body of Christian opinion in the United States.

The pronouncement must be viewed against the background of present American opinion. To anyone familiar with the prevailing sentiment in the United States, it is most remarkable that so representative body as the Federal Council should declare that the critical and supreme political issue of to-day is "not the economic issue of communism versus capitalism, or the issue of state socialism, versus free enterprise", and that in regard to such matters "it is normal that there should be diversity and experimentation in the world". The position will not strike most readers in Europe as very novel, but in making the statement the Federal Council is taking a stand far in advance of average opinion in the American Churches. In the existing state of that opinion it means a great deal that the Churches should have drawn a clear distinction between the vindication of a free society and free enterprise in the economic field.

On the other hand, the contention "that the basic international issue is the simple issue of the police state as against the free society" will seem to many of our readers too great a simplification of the problem. Even those who are convinced that the opposition on which the American statement lays stress comes very near the heart of the real problem will feel that before a satisfactory position can be reached both terms of the contrast need fuller exploration.

The police state is not simply something which men have deliberately chosen. However much they may have succumbed to its dangers and temptations, it is something that has been imposed to a large extent by historical circumstances. If the party in power believe that their political opponents in the event of their seizing power will put themselves and their friends to death or send them to concentra-

tion camps, it is only natural that they should take every precaution that they can think of to prevent such a thing happening. Free institutions will only work where there is a long established and widely diffused tradition and habit of toleration. This does not mean that those who are privileged to enjoy free institutions must not make every effort of which they are capable to preserve and extend them.

Similarly, the free society is a conception that needs much fuller examination than has yet been given to it. When the matter is looked into a host of questions begin to open up to which at present there is no wholly convincing answer. We have also to ask ourselves the searching question how far America and Great Britain embody in their life and institutions the principles of the free society to an extent that justifies them in standing before the world as its exponents and champions. Anyone who has been in touch with younger Christians from Asia or Africa, like Mr. M. M. Thomas, whose address at the Oslo Conference appeared in a recent News-Letter, must realize that however strong their opposition to the atheistic and materialistic aspects of communism, they feel that in regard to racial questions (to which the Pope made delicate allusion in his letter to President Truman) the attitude of Russia is more congenial than that of the professedly Christian democracies.

The documents quoted in this News-Letter are attempts to form a Christian judgment regarding questions on which hinge the issues of peace or war and consequently, in view of the nature of modern war, of the survival of the human race. We must hope that those who have in hand the preparations for the first assembly of the World Council of Churches, which will meet in Amsterdam next year, will give them close attention, with a view to the guidance of Christian opinion throughout the world. The Christian News-Letter will do what it can in the coming months to shed further light upon them.

Kathleen Bliss

CROSS-ROADS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

A statement submitted by the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace and adopted by the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, July 1, 1947.

By the providence of God and the circumstances of history, the American people are now given a world opportunity and responsibility of unparalleled scope. If we as a nation measure up to the task set before us, a better world order than mankind has known can come into being. If we fail, the whole family of nations will suffer untold tragedies before any comparable opportunity may arise. Such are the stakes of American policy to-day.

We deal here with that policy as regards (I) relief and reconstruction, (II) relations with the Soviet Union, (III) relations with the United Nations, (IV) moral bases underlying these relations.

I

The United States should contribute largely to the relief and reconstruction of a dislocated world

Christian precept and enlightened self-interest call for United States' economic aid to a degree not yet understood or accepted by our people. When men are ill-nourished, ill-clothed, and ill-housed, the material problems of mere survival dominate to the detriment of intellectual and moral growth and there cannot be an adequate realization of man's God-given possibilities. Also the United States cannot safely or happily be an island of abundance in a sea of privation, or permit its productive power to be curtailed in the face of widespread need.

The United States should, and consistently with its own economic health can, largely aid in relief and reconstruction. The amount of that aid is measured not alone by the dollars which our government appropriates, but by production and delivery of needed goods. An adequate program may involve a reconsideration of basic domestic policies in relation to such subjects as taxation, public debt, tariff, labor and

management relations, and price policies. Whether or not the over-all program seems in its immediate consequences to affect adversely certain features of our economic life, the duty is inescapable. . . .

Aid should not be limited to money and goods. Modern experience has found many new ways to increase productivity and to multiply the results of human effort. Americans, out of the abundance of their vitality, resourcefulness and technical skill, can do much to hasten the attainment elsewhere of self-sustaining economies and to end abnormal dependence on outside economic aid.

While mass relief through governmental action is necessary, the American people ought not to look upon that as relieving them of personal responsibility. Governmental relief is anonymous and carries no personal message of sympathy. Our people should seek out and use the many available ways of providing personalized help, not merely in terms of money and things, but in terms of intellectual and spiritual fellowship. That is good for the givers as well as for the recipients. It stimulates a revival of hope and expresses the spirit of reconciliation and good will without which political or economic action will prove inadequate. The Churches' program of relief and reconstruction makes a special contribution.

II

The hope of peaceful relations with the Soviet Union lies in making clear to all that the basic international issue is the simple issue of the police state as against a free society

The most difficult international problem is to establish working relations with the Soviet Union.¹ The inability of the Foreign Ministers at Moscow to agree on any major matter, the enunciation of the "Truman Doctrine" in relation to Greece and Turkey and the further penetration of Soviet political power into Europe, notably in the government of Hungary and in

¹ This matter was dealt with by our statement on "Soviet-American Relations" of October 11th, 1946. Subsequent events have emphasized the significance of that statement and, we believe, its validity.

some influential political parties and labour unions in France, Italy and Germany, have intensified the tension between our nations.

We believe that one cause of this increased tension, and a cause which it lies within our power to control, is failure to demonstrate that the American people stand for a basic moral and political principle and not merely for self-interest. The critical and supreme political issue of to-day is that of the free society versus the police state. It is not the economic issue of communism versus capitalism or the issue of state socialism versus free enterprise. As to such matters, it is normal that there should be diversity and experimentation in the world. By a free society we mean a society in which human beings, in voluntary co-operation, may choose and change their way of life and in which force is outlawed as a means to suppress or eliminate spiritual, intellectual and political differences between individuals and those exercising the police power. The police state denies such rights. In the Soviet Union such denial is sought to be justified by Marxian communism. As we pointed out in our earlier statement, that doctrine "in its orthodox philosophy stands clearly opposed to Christianity. . . . Its revolutionary strategy involves the disregard of the sacredness of personality which is fundamental in Christianity."

The same statement went on to say that if American initiative is to prevail it must carry world-wide conviction on two basic facts: first, that "our nation utterly renounces for itself the use internationally of the method of intolerance"; and, second, that "persistence internationally by the Soviet Government or the Soviet Communist Party in methods of intolerance, such as purge, coercion, deceitful infiltration, and false propaganda shielded by secrecy, will not in fact make its faith prevail and will jeopardize the peace".

We believe that our nation has failed to carry conviction on those two basic propositions, particularly the first. There exists abroad a widespread impression that we ourselves are using, or are prepared to use, methods of coercion to impose on others our particular form of society. That impression is largely due to unfriendly propaganda; also our practice in some instances has not always made our position clear. The

peoples of the world are confused. Without doubt, they overwhelmingly prefer a free society of tolerance, although many prefer state socialism to free enterprise. However, they feel caught between the two greatest and most vigorous powers of the world, each of which, they assume, is seeking to impose its will by coercive methods of intolerance. As a result, there is no impressive and decisive alignment of the moral and spiritual forces of the world. The disunity or neutrality encourages Soviet leaders to persist internationally in their own methods of intolerance and they are winning support from among the many who feel that they are offered a choice only between rival imperialisms.

In order that moral power may be potent for peace and in order that the United States may not be isolated and endangered in the world, our nation must stand plainly for something so simple that all can understand and so clearly right that all men of good will will agree. That goal is a world of free societies wherein all men, as the children of God, are recognized to have certain basic rights, including liberty to hold and change beliefs and practices according to reason and conscience, freedom to differ even from their own government and immunity from persecution or coercion on account of spiritual and intellectual beliefs. We recognize that at home our people have not eradicated some kinds of intolerance, especially in race relations. There is, however, a profound difference between a free society, in which there can be appeal to the conscience of men to bring about self-correction, and a police state where no dissent is allowed.

Our people, by word and deed, at home and abroad, ought to make clear that they stand on the principle of a free society as against a police state. Then we shall have brought into clear relief the issue on which turn the great decisions of our time. We shall have put in proper perspective the issues of communism, state socialism, co-operatives, capitalism, free enterprise and other forms of social or economic life, admitting the right of all to experiment and seek by fair and tolerant methods to propagate their beliefs in the world. When our nation's position is clarified in this respect, the American people will have identified themselves with a great principle which attracts the

loyalty of men generally. On this principle the will of so many throughout the world could be consolidated as to make obvious the futility of attempting to extend generally the police state system. Then there would be reasonable basis to hope that the attempt would probably be renounced, if only as a matter of expediency. Fear and distrust would then give place to an atmosphere in which the nations could work together for a just and durable peace.

III

The United States should avail itself more fully of the great possibilities of the United Nations

Our nation should not become so absorbed in dealing directly with international problems that it ignores the United Nations as a means for promoting that consolidation of moral force which is indispensable to peace. We are glad that the legislation implementing the "Truman Doctrine" recognized that the United Nations might hereafter assume the burden of maintaining the integrity of Greece and Turkey. Our nation should, however, avail itself more adequately of the great possibilities of the United Nations. The General Assembly of the United Nations has already shown that it can focus the moral judgment of mankind so as to influence the policies of governments. No nation has yet presented a program or argued a case before the General Assembly without paying deference to public opinion as registered in that Assembly. The United States ought to place greater dependence on this demonstrated moral power of the world assembly and, as a member, to submit proposals which will stimulate that power.

The Assembly has established several agencies for human betterment, in most of which the Soviet Union has so far not accepted membership. We do not believe that that abstention will persist indefinitely if these agencies actually become effective and creative bodies, doing good deeds in the world. It is probable that the Soviet Union will stay aloof from them only as they are relatively impotent. By invigorating these agencies out of the physical, mental and spiritual resources which the American people possess in great measure, our nation can do much to make these agencies into instrumentalities for unity in the world.

IV

It devolves primarily upon our Christian people to assure policies which rely upon moral rather than merely material power

Our people need to do much more than they are doing to demonstrate their conviction that the greatest forces in the world are moral forces and not material forces, and that with God all things are possible, even peace. We utterly reject the idea of the inevitability of war and we oppose all national policies which have that presupposition. A casual observer of American conduct might conclude that our national affairs are operated on the assumption that war is so probable that it is not worth while to take a chance on the possibility of peace. There is increasing discussion of military establishments, military training, military bases and new weapons of destruction. Hysteria is growing at a time which is so critical that calmness of judgment is indispensable. That hysteria suggests a sense of weakness and lack of Christian faith.

It is time that the American people made clear that, whatever may be their views about the military aspects of national defense, they do not put primary reliance upon material defense. Our chief reliance is on a moral offensive. Therefore, we have here emphasized some of the ingredients of a positive foreign policy which we believe stems from positive Christian principles.

The positive foreign policy we emphasize will require strong spiritual foundations both at home and abroad. Herein lies a major challenge to the Churches, now drawing closer together in a world-wide fellowship. No policy, in a free society, can be permanently stronger than the faith of the people. Dynamic international policies must reflect a dynamic faith if they are to endure ; they must reflect a righteous faith if they are worthy to endure.

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